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Danish celebrities take the lead in promoting courteous smoking

Denmark has taken the initiative in bridging the gap between smokers and non-smokers all over Europe with a campaign designed to promote the courteous use of tobacco.

Two well-known personalities in Denmark, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, who is also a prominent figure in the EEC community, and the actress Hannah Bjarnhof, are appearing in advertisements on behalf of the smokers' association, Hen-Ry, to promote courteous smoking. The ads are running in one of Denmark's largest newspapers, Berlingske Tidende.

In the ads, the actress and the minister both state that they support the Association of Courteous Smokers (Hen-Ry) because they believe tolerance and respect should be exhibited by everyone - not least between smokers and non-smokers. They also believe that decisions about tobacco smoking should be taken after careful evaluation of all the evidence from both sides, which is essential for a balanced viewpoint.

The ads are the first to appear for the association. Hannah Bjarnhof appeared in a full-page ad on Friday, 3 March, and Mr. Ellemann-Jensen will appear on Tuesday, 7 March.

The Hen-Ry association was established in Denmark in 1987 by a group of people who were worried about the increasing restrictions upon smoking and pressure against smokers. Hen-Ry strongly advocates the idea of a smoker's right to smoke, when done with consideration and courtesy towards others.

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Hen-Ry, cont'd ...

Hen-Ry emphasises the fact that the association does not promote or encourage anybody to start smoking. But when adults have chosen to smoke as part of a desired lifestyle, then society should permit them the freedom to enjoy this activity, when and if their smoking is done with consideration towards others and in accordance with the regulations laid down for smoke-free areas in hospitals, cinemas and other similar locations.

Karsten Kesselring, the Chairman of Hen-Ry, said, "We want to involve smokers and non-smokers in a constructive debate on the subject of tobacco smoking. The two groups must be able to live together in mutual respect and tolerance, and we trust the Hen-Ry initiative will begin this process."

"The subject of tobacco smoke has become an emotional and discriminatory issue. The myths about passive smoking are plentiful, and the non-smoking organisations are becoming more and more aggressive and dominant. This, unfortunately, has had a negative effect on the search for the truth regarding the key issue, passive smoking or environmental tobacco smoke."

"We believe Hen-Ry has an important role to play in helping stimulate a rational, scientific debate - with contributions from both sides - to resolve the situation so that we can all live in harmony. And as the issue is not only a Danish one, I have informed our sister-organisations all over Europe about our initiative."

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